

Message Text

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FOR CARTER FROM PA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HEREWITH FULL TEXT OP-ED BY GEORGE F. WILL WASHINGTON
POST APRIL 13 HEADED "BACK TO THE BACKFIRE ARGUMENT."

2. LAWYERS HAVE AN AXIOM: IF YOU HAVE THE LAW ON YOUR
SIDE, ARGUE THE LAW; IF YOU HAVE THE EVIDENCE ON YOUR SIDE,
ARGUE THE EVIDENCE; IF YOU HAVE NEITHER, POUND THE TABLE.
IN AN OVERWROUGHT LETTER IN RESPONSE TO MY RECENT COLUMN
ON THE SOVIET BACKFIRE BOMBER, HERBERT SCOVILLE POUNDS THE
TABLE.

3. SCOVILLE ONCE WAS A GOVERNMENT DISARMAMENT ADVISER, AND
HIS ARGUMENTS ARE OF INTEREST, IF ONLY BECAUSE THEY ARE, IN
PRIMITIVE FORM, ARGUMENTS THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WILL
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USE IN DEFENSE OF THE STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION AGREEMENT
IT IS NEGOTIATING. SCOVILLE'S ILL-TEMPEREDNESS IS UNDER-
STANDABLE. HE HAS THE UNENVIABLE TASK OF DEFENDING THE
ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION THAT BACKFIRE IS NOT A STRATEGIC
WEAPON AND SO NEED NOT COUNT AGAINST SOVIET STRATEGIC-ARMS
LIMITS.

4. SCOVILLE'S BALD ASSERTION THAT BACKFIRE CANNOT RETURN TO SOVIET BASES AFTER STRIKING TARGETS IN THE UNITED STATES IS MISLEADING BECAUSE BACKFIRE CAN BE REFUELED, AND IT IS IRRELEVANT BECAUSE BACKFIRE CAN STRIKE THE UNITED STATES AND LAND IN A THIRD COUNTRY, SUCH AS CUBA. (MANY U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBERS COUNTED IN SALT ALSO WOULD LAND IN THIRD COUNTRIES. NO U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBER CAN RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES AFTER A STRIKE AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION WITHOUT REFUELING.)

5. SCOVILLE CHALLENGES THE STATEMENT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAS ACCEPTED 600-KILOMETER RANGE LIMITS ON CRUISE MISSILES. IN FACT, THE ADMINISTRATION HAS ACCEPTED SUCH LIMITS ON ALL ARMED GROUND-LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILES, ALL ARMED SEA-LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILES, AND ALL ARMED AIR-LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILES, AND ALL ARMED AIR-LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILES EXCEPT THOSE CARRIED ON "HEAVY BOMBERS."

6. BECAUSE OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S UNILATERAL AND UNRECIPROCATED DECISION TO CANCEL THE B1 BOMBER, THE ONLY HEAVY BOMBERS THE UNITED STATES WILL HAVE FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE ARE THE AGING B52S.

7. SCOVILLE SUGGESTS THAT IF THE UNITED STATES INSISTED THAT BACKFIRE COUNT AGAINST SOVIET SALT TOTALS, THE SOVIETS WOULD INSIST ON COUNTING U.S. F111S AND F4S BASED IN EUROPE
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AND ON CARRIERS. BUT F111S AND F4S ARE HARDLY COMPARABLE TO BACKFIRES. THEY HAVE MUCH LESS RANGE AND MUCH LIGHTER PAYLOADS THAN BACKFIRES HAVE.

8. OF COURSE, IF THE SOVIETS WANT TO COUNT U.S. PLANES DEPLOYED TO DEFEND OUR ALLIES, THE SOVIETS SHOULD BE WILLING TO COUNT THE ENORMOUS AND EXPANDING SYSTEMS WITH WHICH THEY THREATEN OUR ALLIES. AND, OF COURSE, SCOVILLE KNOWS, BUT DOES NOT CARE TO DWELL UPON, THE FACT THAT THE SOVIETS ARE UNWILLING TO DO SO.

9. TO UNDERSTAND WHY THE SOVIETS ARE UNWILLING, CONSIDER THE MOST RECENT ARGUMENT FROM ARTHUR COX, WHOSE RINGING DEFENSE OF THE SOVIETS' POSITION ON BACKFIRE STARTED THIS AGREEABLE TEMPEST. COX, WHO IS A PAID CONSULTANT TO THE ADMINISTRATION, SAYS THAT IF THE ADMINISTRATION HAD INSISTED THAT BACKFIRE COUNT AS A STRATEGIC WEAPON, THEN THE SOVIETS WOULD HAVE INSISTED THAT FB111S COUNT AGAINST U.S. TOTALS. COX NOTES THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE NOT "DEMANDED" INCLUSION OF FB111S IN STRATEGIC TOTALS.

10. PERHAPS COX THINKS THAT IS AN EXAMPLE OF SOVIET MAG-

NANIMITY. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT COULD HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE FACT THAT THE SOVIETS SOON WILL HAVE NEARLY THREE TIMES MORE BACKFIRES THAN THE UNITED STATES HAS FB111S.

11. COX ALSO NOTES THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE NOT "DEMANDED" THAT WE INCLUDE OUR FIGHTER-BOMBERS BASED IN EUROPE, ASIA, AND ON CARRIERS. BUT IT WOULD BE STARTLING INDEED IF THEY DID DEMAND THAT THEATER FORCES BE INCLUDED IN THE EQUATION.

12. HERE IS HOW THE BALANCE LOOKS FOR MEDIUM-RANGE MISSILES: U.S., 0; U.S.S.R., 600 (SS4S, SS5S) PLUS THE NEW SS20S BEING DEPLOYED. AND MEDIUM BOMBERS: U.S., 60 (FB111S); U.S.S.R., APPROXIMATELY 600 (BADGERS AND UNCLASSIFIED

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BLINDERS).

13. AS TO OTHER NUCLEAR-CAPABLE AIRCRAFT OF LESS THAN INTERCONTINENTAL RANGE, THE RUSSIANS ALSO HAVE AN ADVANTAGE. IN EUROPE ALONE THEY HAVE ROUGHLY 1,400 AGAINST THE UNITED STATES' 400. (THESE FIGURES ARE FROM THE 1976 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE U.S. ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY.)

14. COX'S MOST REVEALING ARGUMENT CONSISTS OF QUOTING THE SOVIET STATESMEN THAT "TO RAISE SUCH QUESTIONS WOULD LEAD MATTERS TO A SITUATION WHERE THERE WILL BE NO AGREEMENT AT ALL." AND THERE YOU HAVE THE ADMINISTRATION'S NEGOTIATING POSTURE. THE SOVIETS DETERMINE THE AGENDA FOR NEGOTIATIONS AND THEN THE SUBSTANCE OF AGREEMENTS, BECAUSE THEY KNOW THE ADMINISTRATION BELIEVES THAT ALMOST ANY AGREEMENT IS PREFERABLE TO NO AGREEMENT.

15. THE FINAL ARGUMENT THAT WILL BE HEARD FROM THE ADMINISTRATION BEFORE THE SENATE REJECTS THE SALT AGREEMENT WILL BE: THIS IS BETTER THAN NOTHING.

16. BY A CONSIDERABLE MARGIN, THE SENATE WILL DISAGREE. CHRISTOPHER

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